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EXHORTATION

TO

FIRMNESS and CONSTANCY

IN TRUE

RELIGION.

IN A

SERMON

Preached at

St. *MARY ISLINGTON*,

Feb. 2. 16$\frac{11}{12}$.

By *Shadrach Cooke*, M. A. Lecturer there.

Quemcunque fortem videris Miserum neges. Sen. Tr.

Do well O Lord unto those that are Good, and True of Heart, Ps. 125.

Imprimatur, Guil. Needham, *R. R. in Christo P. ac D. D.* Wilhelmo *Archiep.* Cant. *à Sacer. Domest.* May 12. 1688.

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

St. MARK 8. 38.

Whoſoever therefore ſhall be aſhamed of Me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and ſinful Generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.

AT the 27th. Verſe of this Chapter we find our Saviour puts this Queſtion to his Diſciples, *Saying unto them, Whom do Men ſay that I am?* Which Inquiry he doth not make for his own better Information, or Satisfaction, in this Caſe, *Becauſe he knew all Men,* John 2. *and needed not that any ſhould teſtifie of Man, for he knew* 24, 25. *what was in Man:* But it was with Deſign, as we may ſee afterwards, to ſet his own Diſciples Right and Orthodox in the Opinion or Knowledge of himſelf. For upon their anſwering, Ver. 28. *John the Baptiſt, but ſome ſay Elias, and others, one of the Prophets: He ſaith unto them,* Ver. 29. *Whom ſay ye that I am?* Which occaſioned that Confeſſion of Peter, in the Name of them all, *Thou art the Chriſt,* the Meſſiah, the true Saviour or Redeemer of Mankind. Whereupon our Saviour proceeds to give them a more full Account of the End of his Coming, and of the Things concerning himſelf, particularly of his Death and Paſſion, Ver. 31. *And he began to teach them that the Son of Man muſt ſuffer, and be rejected of the Elders, and of the chief Prieſts, and Scribes, and be killed.* Now

Peter, notwithſtanding the Soundneſs of his late Profeſſion, was ſo far from being *then* Infallible, that he runs upon the moſt groſs Error and Miſtake; for he was ſo ſcandalized at the News of a Suffering and Crucified Saviour, that upon this Account of himſelf, *Peter took him, and began to rebuke him*, Ver. 32. Whereupon our Saviour takes occaſion to reprove him, and he doth it ſmartly, Ver. 33. *But when he had turned about, and looked on his Diſciples, he rebuked Peter, ſaying, Get thee behind me Satan, for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but the things that be of Men*; which ſeems to imply either, Firſt, That *Peter* was infected with that Opinion ſo common amongſt the Jews, who look'd for ſuch a Saviour, as would be a great and mighty Prince, that ſhould deliver them out of their preſent Miſery and Servitude, and reduce them and their Nation to a moſt Flouriſhing State and Condition: Or elſe Secondly, and as a Conſequence hereof, He reproves that his Senſual and Carnal Spirit, and intimates to him and all Men, that Suffering might be, as indeed it is, oppoſit and diſagreeable to all worldly Intereſt; but it's otherwiſe with him and all his Followers, for he was, as you have heard, *To ſuffer, to be rejected, and to be killed.* And herein he tells all his Diſciples they were to reſemble him, and muſt expect and prepare accordingly, Ver. 34. *And when he had called the People unto him, with his Diſciples alſo, he ſaid unto them, Whoſoever will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs, and follow me.* As Chriſt *was a Man of Sorrow and acquainted with Grief*, did meet with wonderful Difficulties and Afflictions: So his Diſciples alſo *muſt through much Tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God.* And the induring this to the utmoſt extremity (even to Death it ſelf) though it be our preſent loſs, or diſadvantage, is the certain way to provide for and ſecure our future Intereſt: *For whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe*

it;

it; but whoſoever ſhall loſe his life for my ſake, or the Goſpels, the ſame ſhall ſave it, Ver. 35. And thus to procure the favour of God, and to make a Proviſion for our immortal Souls in Heaven, (whatever we do, or however it coſts us) is both in it ſelf more eligible, and of greater concern to us than all things here below; and is withal ſuch a Conſideration as will make us moſt firm and ſteady in this Holy Faith and Profeſſion, or expoſe us to the ſevereſt Diſpleaſure of our Lord hereafter, if we are by any means diſſettled in our preſent Fidelity to Chriſt and his Doctrin; *For what ſhall it profit a Man, if he ſhall gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul? Or what ſhall a Man give in exchange for his Soul? Whoſoever therefore ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my Words, in this Adulterous and Sinful Generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.*

From which Words I ſhall ſpeak to theſe following particulars, which ſeem to be the Natural reſult of them as now conſidered;

Firſt, What that is which our Saviour here warns all his Diſciples againſt, or what is meant by our being aſhamed of Chriſt and of his Words.

Secondly, What are, or may be the Temptations thereunto.

Thirdly, The Aggravations hereof.

Fourthly, The Judgments or Puniſhments to be inflicted for it.

Fifthly, The Means to eſcape or avoid it.

Now in the Firſt place, That great Evil which our Lord here ſpeaks of, may imply ſome, or all, of theſe following particulars.

Firſt, An utter Rejecting or Renouncing of him, and his Doctrin.

Secondly, An external Denial or Diſowning them.

Thirdly, A Recoiling or Averſion to ſome more difficult Parts, or duties of Religion.

Fourthly, Some Actions or Proceedings that are contrary to the real Intereſt, or Advantage, of true Religion.

The Evil of all which, we ſhall better apprehend by a diſtinct Conſideration of each particular.

Firſt then, *To be aſhamed of Chriſt and of his Word*, may imply an utter Rejecting or Renouncing of him and his Doctrin; and ſo may either refer to ſuch our Saviour ſpeaks of, and threatens ſo ſeverely, Matth. 10. 14, 15. *Whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor hear your Words, when ye depart out of that Houſe, or City, ſhake off the Duſt of your Feet. Verily I ſay unto you, It ſhall be more tollerable for the Land of Sodom and Gomorrha, in the day of Judgment, then for that City:* Which is meant of ſuch who reject the very firſt overtures of Grace and Salvation. And now if he pronounces their Caſe ſo deſperate, how much worſe (if poſſible) may we conclude the Circumſtances of thoſe, who having received, do ſhamefully deſert that Holy Faith and Profeſſion, and utterly caſt off or diſown all their former ſhare and intereſt in Chriſt and his Doctrin; that is, in ſhort, an utter Apoſtacy from the Faith of Chriſt, and a Renouncing that their Holy Religion. Which Sin, with the ſelf-ſame Note and Character of it, as here expreſt, is mentioned by the Apoſtle, Heb. 6. *It is impoſſible for them who were once enlightened, and have taſted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and had taſted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come: If they ſhall fall away, to renew them again to repentance: Seeing they crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame.* Where the Nature of this Sin, or the great Ingredient of its Guilt, is the Crucifying Chriſt, as it were, a Second time, and ſo again expoſing him to

ſhame

ſhame. Whereupon, as the learned Annotator obſerves, *That muſt need, conclude renouncing or denying of Chriſt, the looking on him as ſuch the Jews pretended him to be, when they Crucified him, that is an Impoſture:* That is, in ſhort, *Men of Corrupt Minds, reprobate concerning the Faith*, 2 Tim. 3. 8.

Secondly, This Phraſe of being *aſhamed of me, and my Words*, may ſignify an external Denyal, or Diſowning of Chriſt and his Profeſſion, even when we have a perſwaſion in our own Minds contrary thereunto; but we (upon ſome accounts to be ſpoken to preſently) do herein act contrary to the inward Sence and Conviction of our own Minds and Judgments: And ſo we may hereupon explain or interpret this Expreſſion, or the Words here before us, from that parallel Place Matth. 10. 32,33. Where our Saviour ſpeaks to the ſame, or like Argument, *Whoſoever therefore ſhall confeſs me before Men, him will I confeſs alſo before my Father which is in Heaven. But whoſoever ſhall deny me before Men, him will I alſo deny before my Father which is in Heaven.* Which Words do very plainly refer to a generous Owning, or publick Atteſtation of Chriſt and his Doctrin, with the Condemnation of the contrary Faintneſs or Cowardize in thoſe who yet really own and profeſs his Religion. And of this Nature was that Sin which the Scripture it ſelf takes notice of in *Joſeph of Arimathea, being a Diſciple of Jeſus, but ſecretly for fear of the Jews; and in Nicodemus, which at the firſt came to Jeſus by Night. Among the chief Rulers alſo many believed on him, but becauſe of the Phariſees they did not confeſs him leſt they ſhould be put out of the Synagogue, for they loved the praiſe of Men more than the praiſe of God.* Where we ſee plainly, there may be an inward Belief in Chriſt, or a full and thorough Perſwaſion of him, and his Doctrin; when yet in ſhew and appearance there may be no external Owning or Confeſſion of it: And ſuch as was this may be

St. John 19 38, 39. c. 12. v. 42,43.

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the caſe of many Chriſtians, who may be too often prevailed upon to diſguiſe or diſſemble the internal Sence and Dictates of their Minds and Conſciences, and baſely force their Tongues to give their Hearts the Lye: But now to believe in Chriſt, and upon all Caſes, and in all Circumſtances and Conditions, to aſſert, own, declare, and atteſt as much; this is truly Generous and Chriſtian, a Glory and an Honour to Chriſt and our Profeſſion; whereas to counterfeit or cover what we are, or what we believe, is the baſeſt Impoſture, the moſt cowardly Hypocriſie, and is moſt certainly, *Being aſhamed of Chriſt and his Words in an Adulterous and Sinful Generation.*

Thirdly, An other thing imply'd or ſignify'd by this Expreſſion, *Being aſhamed of me and of my Words*, is a recoiling, or averſion to ſome more difficult Parts or Duties of Religion: That is, when Men will profeſs Chriſt, or own his Faith or Religion, and go on fairly with him for ſome time; but ſhake hands, leave or deſert him when it comes to ſome extraordinary Streſs or Difficulty. Thus it was in the Caſe before us, *Peter* ſeems to make a fair Profeſſion of his Faith, *When he ſaid, thou art the Chriſt*, Ver. 29. But we find he was ſtrangely ſtartled, and mightily out of the way upon our Saviours informing him of thoſe great Troubles and Calamities that ſhould befal him. The News of a Saviour was readily imbraced by him, but he doth mightily regret his diſtreſſed Circumſtances: Nor was this ſelf-ſame thing a leſs Scandal to ſome other of his Diſciples; for upon our Saviours telling ſome, of his *Giving his Fleſh for them to eat, and his Blood to drink* (which he did by his Death and Crucifixion for them) *Many therefore of his Diſciples, when they heard this, ſaid, This is an hard ſaying, Who can hear it?* Some things required of us to believe or do, that are eaſily obſerved or practiced, do not, and indeed cannot much affect us. But this is an inſtance of our

John 6. 60.

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chief, if not pure, obſervance to Chriſt, that we yield our ſelves wholly and intirely to him even in thoſe Things and Caſes that are moſt abſtruce, difficult and uneaſie; herein conſiſts our chiefeſt Owning and moſt glorious Profeſſion of our Faith in him: And from ſuch a practice he infers the Doctrin we are now upon; for as it plainly appears by the Context, from this Duty or Principle laid down, Ver. 34. *Whoſoever will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs, and follow me*: I ſay upon this he infers, *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me*, &c. As if he ſhould ſay, He that will not hearken to me, or accept of me on ſuch Terms and Conditions, how hard ſoever they may ſeem to him, is *Aſhamed of me*, and ſhall fare accordingly. *And he that takes not his Croſs, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me*, Matth. 10. 38. Our moſt eminent and proper Owning of Chriſt and Profeſſion of his Faith, is when we are called by him to the greateſt ſtreights and hardeſt Duties. *Doth Job fear God for nought? Haſt thou not made a Hedge about him, and about his Houſe, and about all that he hath on every ſide? Thou haſt bleſſed the work of his Hands, and his Subſtance is increaſed in the Land. But put forth thine Hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curſe thee to thy Face*, Job 1. 10, 11. What was here falſly applied to this good Man, is too often verified in many others. We are willing to hearken to God, and to obſerve him on eaſie Terms and in proſperous Circumſtances; but if any thing thwarts this, like the young Man in the Goſpel, on the ſame Occaſion, *It makes us go away Sorrowful*. Whereas now a Sound and True Faith diſputes no Commands, ſticks at no Oppoſition; for the greater the Hardſhip and Difficulty, the more our Duty and Obedience: So that in ſhort we may go a great way in a fair Profeſſion of Religion, but if we refuſe or decline the difficult Parts,

Duties,

Duties, or Inſtances of it, wherewith God may try and exerciſe our Faith. This is a Rebellion againſt, or a Diſſertion of Chriſt and his Doctrin, *A being aſhamed of him and his Words*; for every Chriſtian ſhould be ready to ſay with the Apoſtle, Rom. 8. 38, 39. *I am perſwaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things preſent, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.*

Fourthly, *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and my Words*, may ſignify ſuch as act contrary to the true Intereſt, and real Advantage of that Faith and Religion which they profeſs. And this part or inſtance carries in it the guilt of all the foregoing Evils, and goes a conſiderable ſtep further; to make a fair Pretence, and glorious Profeſſion of Religion only to diſgrace, abuſe, or betray it; is the moſt aggravating Circumſtance of Guilt and Condemnation, and ſeems to be the very caſe of *Judas* himſelf, who was one of our Saviours profeſſed Diſciples, attended him conſtantly, heard his gracious Words, ſaw his Miracles, and was a conſtant Partaker of his Goodneſs; yet who but this was the Villain that betrayed him? And therefore our Lord upon that Occaſion ſeems to beſpeak this Wretch in ſuch a manner as methinks, goes home, and cuts to the very quick, when he ſaid, as 'tis St. *Matth.* 26. 50. and St. *Luke* 22. 48. *Friend wherefore art thou come? Judas, betrayeſt thou the Son of Man with a Kiſs? Betrayeſt thou!* who was ſo near to me, and ſo much obliged by me. If any wiſe to injure or deſert our Religion, or upon any account to be aſhamed of Chriſt, is infinitely dangerous; to promote or forward a contrary Intereſt, and to be our ſelves helpful and inſtrumental to the ruin or prejudice of that our own very

Faith

Faith and Profeſſion, is the higheſt Diſhonour we can offer to God and our Religion, and the utmoſt violation of all Honeſty and Conſcience.

And having thus given you an Account of this great and dangerous Evil, of *being aſhamed of Chriſt, and his Words*, and ſhewed to you what it is, or wherein it doth Conſiſt: Being 1. An utter Renouncing our Religion, 2. An external Diſowning of it. 3. An Averſion to ſome of its more difficult Duties. Or 4. Such Actions and Proceedings as are contrary to the Intereſt of Chriſt and his Doctrine. I proceed according to the Method propounded, to Conſider in the 2. Place, What are the Temptations to this ſo great and dangerous Evil. And they are generally ſuch as theſe.

1. Baſe and Unworthy Complyance.
2. Secular Gain or Intereſt.
3. The Fear or Danger of Suffering.

1. This great Evil is too often occaſioned through Baſe and Unworthy Complyance: Though Religion, or the Concern of our Souls, is the moſt ſerious and weighty matter in the whole World; yet nothing is ſo much trifled with, and diſregarded, and rendered pliant to every turn, and occaſion; as if the mode of the Times, eminent Examples, and prophane Scoffs and Deriſions, were to be the Rule and Standard of what we were to believe or do in theſe great and momentous Affairs; Men being too often become really *aſhamed* of Chriſt and *his Words* in a *Sinfull* and *Adulterous Generation*: Wherein our Saviour refers to the very Cauſe or Occaſion here laid down for their ſo doing, as if it were unſeemly to own and profeſs Chriſt and his True Religion, amidſt a Generation of Wicked and Sinful Men. *Wherein they think it ſtrange if you run not with them into the ſame exceſs of Riot, ſpeaking Evil of you*, 1. Pet. 4. 4. Great Examples and Importunate Solicitations are very powerful with moſt men,

who are too easily carried away with the Stream, and *follow a multitude to do Evil*: But the Temptations is as Unwarrantable as what it ends in. And such the Emperour *Constantius* thought it to be in that memorable Case, which is thus related by *Eusebius*. "*Constantius*, the Father "of *Constantine*, had this Device came into his Head, "that may be a paradox to hear as it was strange to pra-"ctice; He put it to the choice of all his Courtiers about "him, even to the very Judges themselves, or such as were "placed in the chief Stations of Authority, Whether they "would Sacrifice to Devils, and remain in his Palace in "their wonted Honour, or upon refusal be removed from "his Favour and Presence. Whereupon when the Court "became divided, and some went one and some another "way, the Excellent Prince discovering himself; Those "that yielded he Reproached for their Cowardice, and "Hypocrisie, but greatly Approved and Commended "those that kept their Integrity to God; looking on those "as Traytors to their God, and so not worthy the Fa-"vour of their Prince: For how, said He, shall they "be imagined to be Faithful to their King, who are "found False to God himself? And therefore utterly "Banished them from his Presence: But they that were "Firm and True to God and their Religion, such he did "believe would be just and faithful to Himself. Σωμοτοφύ-"λακας καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς βασιλείας τοὺς φρούρους, &c. He made them the Pro-"tectors and principle Officers of his Kingdom, saying, They "were worthy to be ranked in the number of his Bo-"som Friends and Dearest Relations, and to be valued and "esteemed above his highest Treasures. Herein acting agreeable to that Prudent and Pious Resolution of *David*, *Mine Eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land that they may dwell with me: He that walks in a perfect way, (or is perfect in the way) He shall serve me: He that worketh deceit shall not dwell in my house, he that telleth lies*

shall

ſhall not tarry in my ſight, (or ſhall not be eſtabliſhed) Pſ. 101. 6, 7.

This is the Firſt Thing. Baſe and Unworthy Complyance is very frequently the Occaſion of Mens being aſhamed of Chriſt and his Words.

Whereupon follows in the Second Place, as another great Inducement or Temptation hereunto.

Secular Gain or Intereſt: Which our Saviour hath reſpect to in the Caſe before us, as one Occaſion of this great Evil, ſaying, as he doth, Ver. 36. *What ſhall it profit a Man, if he ſhall gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul?* &c. Intimating the great Prejudices and Diſcouragements againſt him and his Doctrin, were the Solicitations or Temptations of Things here below: Which yet in the greateſt Enjoyments were no wiſe able to compenſate the great Evil they were thereby ſeduced to, of being *aſhamed of Chriſt, and his Words.* Now ſecular Wealth, or Greatneſs, is ſuch a powerful Ingagement againſt all kind of Goodneſs, That the Devil reſerved this Temptation for the laſt; and therefore, it's like, looked on it as the greateſt he could uſe: And which he hoped might prevail even upon our Saviour himſelf, *For he ſheweth him all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and the Glory of them. And ſaith unto him, all theſe Things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me.* Now what could not prevail upon him, is God knows too powerful with many of us, who either through the Ambition of our Spirits, or the Neceſſity of Nature, are by our ſecular Intereſt too often carried beyond the bounds of our Duties, and hereby made complyant to Unjuſt and Diſhonourable Practices. And may not the Apoſtle ſeem to have reference to the worſt Conſequences this way, in the 2 Pet. 2. *There ſhall be falſe Preachers amongſt you, who privily ſhall bring in damnable Hereſies. And through Covetouſneſs ſhall they with feigned Words make Merchandiſe*

of you. But now we may the leſs wonder at that unhappy influence, which this Vice hath over Faith and a good Conſcience; when we remember that Covetouſneſs, or the Love of Secular Gain and Intereſt did make Chriſt's own Diſciple ſhamefully forſake him, and baſely betray him to his moſt Malicious Perſecutors and Murtherers. *One of the Twelve called Judas Iſcariot went unto the Chief Prieſts, and ſaid unto them, What will ye give me and I will deliver him unto you? and they covenanted with him for Thirty pieces of Silver,* Matth. 26. 15. And if the value of about Three Pound Fifteen Shillings could prompt a Diſciple to this horrid Treachery, we may be apt to ſuſpect at leaſt, that a more additional Temptation this way may have too much prevalency upon mean and ſordid Spirits; *Wherefore Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World. If any Man Love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him,* 1 John 2. 15. So powerful are the things here below to keep, or to withdraw Men from a hearty Love and Regard of God and Religion.

The Third and Laſt thing prevalent to this moſt fatal Evil and Impiety is, The Fear or Danger of preſent Sufferings. A Life of Eaſe, Pleaſure and Plenty, is grateful to all Men; whereupon many do readily imbrace the ſmooth ſide of Religion: But Suffering and Perſecution are things contrary to Fleſh and Blood, and are indeed ſevere and terrible Tryals, ſuch as will even ſhake the moſt ſteady and reſolute Chriſtian. Wherefore to ſpeak with the Apoſtle, in this Caſe alſo, *Who is ſufficient for theſe things?* And whatever Men may now think, or talk of it at a diſtance; yet if ever God ſhould call us to this fiery Tryal, it will require a moſt ſteady Faith, together with extraordinary aſſiſtance of the Divine Spirit, to carry us through ſuch extreme Hardſhip and Difficulty: *Peter* who was ſo conſtant with our Saviour, and who

was

was withal so brisk, plain and generous, in his Profession of Christ, and so resolved as nothing could be more: And who its reasonable to think was in his own Judgment firm and immoveable, was yet we know strangely surprised, and utterly confounded when it came to the pinch; insomuch that hardly ever Man was guilty of such a base and sudden Revolt. He found when Danger was very near and threatning, quite different Judgments and Apprehensions of things then when he considered it only at a distance; as will be the case of every Man whom God calls to this most severe and difficult Duty.

There are great and unavoidable Prejudices and Reluctances in human Nature against Torments or Sufferings, and very strange Perplexities and Misgivings of Mind, in that great Change from this to another World: Besides there must needs be unconceiveable Convulsions arise in us, from our Injury or Loss in those things that are instrumental to our present Ease and Comforts; and therefore our Saviour might well put that Question, *Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the Baptism that I am Baptized*, Matth. 20. 22. This he tells us shall be the Portion of some; but upon this Rock very many have made *Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conscience*, having proved the greatest cause of Mens being *Ashamed of Christ, and his Words in an Adulterous and Sinful Generation*.

Having thus considered what that is which our Saviour here warns us against; by our being *Ashamed of Christ, and his Words*. And Secondly, What are, or may be the Temptations thereunto; I proceed to consider in the Third place, The great Guilt or Aggravation hereof; which will largely appear to us from the Consideration of these following Particulars.

1. Thus to be *Ashamed of Christ, and his Words*, is the greatest Dishonour and Scandal to Religion: For if we

conſider the Expreſſion, according to a meer literal acceptation, That is ever more looked upon as moſt Baſe and Scandalous, which Men are loth or aſhamed to own, or acknowledge. Certain it is, That a Diſowning or Diſſertion of Chriſt, and his Religion in whatever way or kind we do it, is an open Declaration to the World of our great diſlike thereof, a plain Repentance of what we have profeſſed, and as it were Advice or Precaution to others againſt all future concern, or regard for God and Religion: The Actions of ſuch a Man do ſeem to ſpeak the Senſe of his Mind after this, or the like manner; *All the whole buſineſs of Religion is meer Noiſe, Cheat, or Impoſture. And whatever Men talk, or ſay about it, is all vain and inſignificant. Why ſhould we wait on the Lord any longer? It is in vain to ſerve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his Ordinance? Therefore they ſay unto God, depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we ſhould ſerve him? And what profit ſhould we have if we pray unto him?* In ſhort, That Religion is not worth the Owning which a Man cannot Suffer, Bleed, and Dye for.

2. And this brings us to a Second Aggravation thereof; That it is the higheſt Indignity or Diſhonour to God. Such is imply'd in the very Expreſſion for it, *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my Words*: So that to be thus guilty is to affront God, and is a perfect and open Defiance to Heaven it ſelf; for 'tis the peculiar and immediate Cauſe of God, who is the Author of Religion, for whoſe ſake and on whoſe account this is Inſtituted and Enjoyn'd us: So that thus baſely to deſert, or any wiſe to forſake or deny him, is not only a withdrawing our Fealty and Allegiance from him; but the ſetting up a profeſs'd Hoſtility and Rebellion againſt him, and a down-right Declaration that *we will not have Him to reign over us.* In a Word, This is the greateſt Obſtinacy, the

moſt

moſt daring Provocation, the higheſt Treachery, that a mortal Creature can be guilty of, againſt the moſt gracious and almighty Being of God; and carries every thing in it that may render *it exceeding Sinful.*

3. Another great Aggravation hereof is, That it is contrary to the Sentiments of our Minds, and ſuch as is an Injury or Violation to our own very Conſciences: For that Man hath nothing to palliate or excuſe his Crime, that breaks through and violates the Senſe or Perſwaſion of his own Conſcience, which is more to him than Ten thouſand Witneſſes. And therefore though Men may be Deaf to this inward Guide, and by their Luſts or ſordid Intereſt be prevailed upon, to contradict or ſtifle thoſe internal Sentiments, yet no Man can think them happy, much leſs hath any reaſon to envy them what they thus obtain. For *this Candle of the Lord* (as is *Solomon's* Phraſe for Conſcience) will ſometime or other glare in their Faces, or burn them to the quick, and torment them ſeverely for being thus Unjuſt, Baſe and Treacherous, to themſelves. And though we ſee it, God knoweth too often, that Men Sacrifice Peace of Conſcience to baſe and unworthy Intereſt, as if worſe than the unjuſt Judge they did not regard God or Man, nor themſelves; yet this Perplexity and Vexation, which is inevitable hereupon, will be a perpetual Plague, and like a troubleſome Ghoſt, haunt and fret them wherever, or however they are. And a Man is ſcarce capable of a greater Condemnation or Puniſhment than thus to decry or reprove his own Actions. *Happy is he that condemneth not himſelf in that Thing which he alloweth.* Rom. 14. 22.

4. And which doth enſue upon this, The Caſe which is here Condemned by our Saviour, is a Reproach even to humane Nature: Firmneſs and Conſtancy of Mind is generous and manly, an Argument of a brave and courageous

ragious Spirit; ſuch *That* is always accounted which can bear it ſelf up, and maintain its Integrity againſt all Oppoſition and Allurements to the contrary: And therefore ſuch reſolute truſty Souls have evermore had the general eſteem and commendation of good and wiſe Men. As on the contrary, its an undoubted proof and inſtance of an unmanly, pitiful or dangerous Temper, eaſily to forgo or yield up our Truth and Integrity, the greateſt Glory of our Nature; ſo that he debaſeth himſelf to the vileſt degree, and moſt miſerable Condition, that debauches the nobleſt Principle of his Soul, as is the caſe of ſuch who are aſhamed of God and a good Cauſe. Another Aggravation that we may add to this, is in the

Fifth Place, Even the preſent Inſecurity of ſuch Men, or of ſuch a Condition, as is here ſpoken of by our Saviour: And this conſideration added to the reſt cuts them clear off from all their holds: Such baſe Hypocriſie and Diſſimulation will not laſt long, and doth but ſeldom anſwer ſuch Mens deſigns in it; for as *Solomon* ſaith, *The Lip of truth ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever, but a lying Tongue is but for a Moment.* Baſe complyances and ſuch unworthy practices in the cauſe of God and Religion, do frequently carry Guilt in their Foreheads, and do ſooner or later prove ineffectual and dangerous to themſelves, and very often ſpoil or fruſtrate their own Actions or Deſigns, *And then all Men that ſee them ſhall laugh them to Scorn:* Whereas certain it is, That Uprightneſs and Integrity, a cloſs and ſteady Adheſion to an honeſt Cauſe, and a good Conſcience, will be more approved of, ſucceeded better, for our Intereſt, and carry us moſt happily thorough all Difficulty and Oppoſition; while Baſe, Cowardize and Diſſimulation, will render us Improſperous in all our Deſigns, and make us every way Odious, and Hateful to God and Man.

From

From whence we proceed to conſider, in the Fourth Place, The Judgment and Puniſhment to be inflicted for it; *Of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* Where our Saviour, as you ſee, doth conſign the Puniſhment of ſuch baſe Deſerters of him, and his Religion, to a future Judgment and Tribunal. Whereupon, by the way, we may make theſe following Obſervations.

Firſt, This threatning of a future Recompence, is not deſigned ſo as to imply an utter Excluſion of all preſent Puniſhment or Judgment, to be inflicted on ſuch Men; they may be, and frequently are, met with and puniſhed ſeverely in this World. The ſting, or guilt of Conſcience, will ſometime fret and torment them, for ſuch baſe and unworthy Practices; they are frequently expoſed to the ſcorn of good Men, and the contempt of the World, and are no ſmall Sufferers in their preſent Enjoyments: Theſe or the like Puniſhments do, or may overtake ſuch Offenders even now at preſent, it being a Practice that is frequently injurious to Mens Secular Intereſt and Security, as we heard before. Thus, with a future, this may alſo refer to or not exclude a preſent Puniſhment, as God in his Wiſdom may think fit and convenient. Though too in the

Second Place this may imply, what doth ſometimes happen, That wicked Men, and among theſe, ſuch as are thus guilty, may paſs through this World with Eaſe or Impunity; and perhaps, to outward appearance, meet with no Puniſhment, no Retribution, for ſo great Impiety. For many good Cauſes God may, for a while, forbear or delay their Puniſhment, to the great and general Day of Accounts, when he will give to every one according to his Works. So that we are not to judge from the preſent Impunity; or, which is more, the Flouriſhing and Proſperous Condition of ſuch Men, though ſo guilty againſt God, that he is altogether regardleſs of them and his Honour: Though he doth forbear, he doth not alto-

 together

gether forget them, but will (if not before) call them to ſtrict Examination another Day.

Whereupon we may obſerve again, Thirdly, That the mentioning of ſuch a future Retribution, may be, and doubtleſs is, with ſome deſign of ſhowing or repreſenting the greater Judgment or Vengeance of God, that is treaſured up againſt them; as if ſuch profligate Sinners could not be enough, or ſufficiently puniſhed till Chriſt were inveſted with his Sovereign Power and Authority. So that this is here mentioned as a very heightning Aggravation of their Puniſhment, they may conſider (and tremble to think on it) that their Doom is reſerved for that Great and Solemn Aſſize. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and my Words, in this Adulterous and Sinful Generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* And its being thus expreſſed, may ſhow the Puniſhment of ſuch to be very Severe and Terrible upon theſe following Accounts. As it doth imply,

1. Chriſt's utter Diſowning of them.
2. After the moſt diſgraceful Sort or Manner.
3. At the moſt ſolemn Time or Seaſon.
4. In Mens greateſt Streights and Neceſſities. And
5. A Conſequence of moſt dreadful Ruin, and eternal Deſtruction.

Firſt, This threatning (here before us) doth imply or ſignify Chriſt's utter Diſowning of them, and that is here repreſented to us theſe Two ways: Firſt, By his being *aſhamed of them*; that is, ſuch ſhall be rejected by him, and quite diſowned, from having any ſhare or benefit in his Redemption, and the Kingdom of his Father. Now, as God ſaith by the Prophet concerning good Men, *They ſhall be mine, ſaith the Lord, in that Day when I make up my Jewels:* So contrariwiſe may be here ſaid, or intended of theſe, Chriſt at that great Day ſhall utterly diſown them, and caſt them from his Preſence for ever; as is ſtill

Secondly,

Secondly, further implied and ſignified by the time here expreſſed for his ſo doing, *When he cometh in the Glory of his Father, &c.* At that great and ſolemn Day, which is the final Conſummation of all things, after which there is nothing to be done, no more Accounts to be made, then ſhall he paſs on them an irrevocable Sentence of Condemnation. And is not this a moſt ſevere and affrightful Caſe, that forebodes and threatens an eternal Baniſhment from the Divine Love and Favour, and the procuring of God's utter Hatred and Diſpleaſure, of which there can be no repeal or recovery. To be thus rejected and abandoned by Chriſt our Lord, who hath ſhed his Blood for our Redemption, and has laid on us the ſtricteſt Obligations imaginable to own and obey him, is a moſt heightning conſideration of Miſery and Condemnation. To ſee, at that great Day of Accounts, the gracious Saviour of the World, thus utterly to reject and caſt off thoſe for whom he ſhed his Blood; and inſtead of Reward or Redemption, to paſs a diſmal Sentence of Puniſhment againſt them, is a cutting conſideration even now to think of, What will it be to experience another Day? Conſidering in the

Second Place, That this will be done after the moſt diſgraceful Sort or Manner: *Of him ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed,* (*Nec Lex eſt juſtior ulla.*) For it both repreſents the Equity of the Divine Proceedings, together with the ſharpneſs of the Puniſhment, as they have been *aſhamed of him,* ſo will he be of them; he will reject and diſown them in the moſt Vile and Contemptious manner; he will be even aſhamed to look upon them, and will caſt them from him with Scorn and Confuſion. Now there is nothing that doth generally more affect human Nature, than to be treated with Contempt; to a good and generous Spirit it is moſt cutting and intollerable. And you can't but obſerve from daily Experience, that nothing goes ſo deep, or afflicts ſo much, as to be ſlighted and contemn'd: From whence we

may make a gueſs of the great Puniſhment of all ſuch Souls as ſhall be thus treated by Chriſt at that Day. There is even to common Malefactors a kind of ſecret Pity and Commiſeration, though Suffering for very Notorious Crimes and Villainies; but thoſe Men are prodigiouſly Guilty and Miſerable, that fall with univerſal Scorn and Deriſion: Yet ſuch, and much worſe, is the Puniſhment here threatned, *Of them ſhall Chriſt be aſhamed.* However others may fare, theſe ſhall ſuffer Shameful and Unpitied, or one great Puniſhment to be inflicted on them is, Shame or Contempt: And you know among Men, That 'tis a great heightning, and ſometimes indeed the utmoſt Aggravation of a Suffering, to have the Ingredient or Circumſtance of Shame or Scandal. And what now ſhall we think of theſe, at that great Day, when whatever is really Shameful and Scandalous ſhall be the Lot and Portion of ſuch Sinners. For,

Thirdly, All this ſhall be at the moſt ſolemn Time and ſon, *Of him ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* Shame or Contempt is a relative Evil, that which doth properly depend on the view or apprehenſion of others, which is more and more heightned or improved (that is rendered ſtill the worſe to bear) the more, and greater the Objects we are thus expoſed to; and therefore how great and intollerable is this moſt Shameful Puniſhment like to be, that is executed or inflicted after ſuch a Serious and Solemn manner, bearing in it whatever may render it Affrightful and Terrible, *Of him ſhall the Son of Man, &c.* that is, Chriſt who was God and Man, this great God ſhall then be aſhamed of him. And as if this were not enough to ſuperadd hereunto, it is Aggravated from the Time, Company, or Circumſtances here mentioned, *When he ſhall come in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels:* Every Word bears in it a moſt cutting Conſideration. This ſhall be their Lot and Portion from him,

him, when he ſhall appear in his infinitely glorious Godhead after the moſt Solemn and Triumphant manner, and comes with Millions of Angels to call all the World to Judgment, before infinite Multitudes of ſuch Pure and Holy Spirits, and before all the World he ſhall paſs ſuch a diſmal Puniſhment upon them. As if he ſhould ſay, Men have very great reaſon to be careful againſt this Evil, conſidering that ſuch a preſent denial, or being aſhamed of Chriſt, ſhall be thus repayed hereafter. They that diſown him now before Men, *in an Adulterous and Sinful Generation*, ſhall be ſhamefully rejected by him before the holy Angels. He that will be inveſted with infinite Glory and Majeſty, will for *This* be then aſhamed of them in the preſence of theſe Pure and Immaculate Beings. And the conſideration of theſe Solemn Circumſtances, is a moſt diſmal Aggravation of that future Condemnation and Puniſhment reſerved for them againſt the great Day of Judgment. Conſidering in the

Fourth Place, That this is in Mens greateſt Streights and Neceſſities; *Of him ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels*; a time of the greateſt diſtreſs and danger. For the future Day of Accounts, or Judgment, (whereof this is ſuch a lively Repreſentation) will be the Seaſon when we ſhall ſtand in moſt need of God, and Chriſt our Redeemer: Then to have a ſhare and intereſt in Heaven, and to have favour with the great Judge of the World, will be our greateſt, and indeed our only Comfort. Nothing will then ſtand us in ſtead, or avail us, but ſuch a happy Proviſion as this: But oh! how miſerable now muſt the contrary caſe of ſuch Men be, who have provoked him to the higheſt degree, and rendered him their utter and implacable Enemy. To be conſcious to our ſelves, that we have done all we could to Affront and Abuſe our Lord and Saviour, as is too much the Caſe of theſe Sinners, muſt ſtrike the deepeſt Melancholy to our Souls.

Souls. Then when we have moſt need of Comfort, we ſhall have the the leaſt of it; and inſtead of Acceptance with God, have a Shameful and Bitter Sentence from him: So that what *Solomon* ſaith, (Prov. 1. 24.—) may be fitly applied to the Caſe before us. *Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed, I have ſtretched out my hand, and no Man regarded; but ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my Reproof: I alſo will laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your Fear cometh; when your fear cometh as deſolation, and deſtruction cometh as a Whirl-wind; when diſtreſs and anguiſh cometh upon you. Then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer; they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not chuſe the fear of the Lord. They would none of my counſel: They deſpiſed all my reproof. Therefore ſhall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.* Whence we proceed to conſider,

Fifthly, A conſequence of moſt dreadful Ruin and Deſtruction; for the great End and Deſign of that his moſt Solemn coming to Judgment, is to paſs an irrevocable Sentence of Happineſs or Miſery on all Mankind; and ſo accordingly this here before us muſt ſignify, or imply, the moſt dreadful Caſe or Condemnation of ſuch Sinners at that Day. This then ſhall be their Sentence, *Depart ye Curſed into the Fire prepared for the Devil, and his Angels:* And the very worſt place in this ſhall be aſſigned them, *They ſhall have their Portion with Hypocrites*; for ſuch they are in the higheſt Nature and Degree. They who believe in God, and do thus ſhamefully Diſſemble with him, or *deny him in an Adulterous and Sinful Generation*, when it may be moſt Glorious or Neceſſary to own or atteſt his Truth, ſtrictly to maintain Faith and a good Conſcience, are the moſt Guilty, and ſhall be the moſt Miſerable of all Men in another World: *Of him ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* And having thus as briefly,

ly, and as plainly, as I could, ſet forth the dreadful Puniſhment of ſuch Men, eſpecially as here intimated, or repreſented by our Saviour.

I think it may be very needfull and requiſite to propound, in the Fifth and Laſt place, The means to avoid this ſo very Great and Dangerous Evil. In order whereunto I ſhall lay down theſe following Rules or Directions.

1. Let us conſider, The ſhortneſs and great uncertainty of this preſent Life. This being a moſt likely means to prevent all Temptations to this Evil; which are occaſioned through Mens overmuch Concern or Fondneſs for this preſent World. This (as we before obſerved) doth too often make us withdraw our Thoughts from God, and become Treacherous againſt him: Wherefore if Men would learn to ſet a due Eſtimate on Things here below, and conſider theſe Worldly Pleaſures and Enjoyments, as they are in themſelves, mean and tranſitory; and that as *Solomon* ſaith, *All is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*, We ſhould be leſs deſirous or inclined to purchaſe them at ſo high a Price. Is a little temporal Intereſt, that may ſoon come to nothing? Is a vain blaſt of Honour or Ambition, or any thing that we can aim at in this World, Satisfactory and Laſting? Why then ſhould they any wiſe diſſettle us in the great Concerns of Faith and Religion? Can any Thing in this World be worth the buying at ſo dear a Rate? *The faſhion of this World* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *paſſeth away*. And would we but eſteem of it accordingly, it would induce us to have meaner thoughts of Things here below, and ſet them upon Things above. And hereupon we ſhould be fully convinc'd, That Truth and Religion, were the only ſolid and laſting Comforts; and that we have nothing here ſo valuable as Faith and a good Conſcience. But if we are ſtill reſolved to make Mammon our God, and to prefer the Pleaſure or Intereſt of this World before all Things, it is to be expected and not wondered at, that Men *ſhould*

be

be ashamed of Christ, and his Words, in this Adulterous and Sinful Generation.

2. Let us duly consider and reflect upon, The great Concern and Interest of our Souls: Which seems to be the very means or remedy here propounded by our Saviour himself, for the prevention of so great an Evil, Ver. 36. *For what shall it profit a Man, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul? Whosoever therefore shall be,* &c. Suppose we could promote the highest Interest here in this World, yet this is not able to preponderate or make amends for, the Loss or Damage we sustain thereby, or undergo for it. Our Souls or Spirits are of a most durable and lasting Nature: Now Religion promotes their great and highest Interest; by adhearing closely to Faith and a good Conscience, We procure *the Love and Favour of God, which is better than Life it self.* We lay up an incorruptable Treasure in Heaven. We secure our best part, That which is indeed only and properly our selves. Let us then but value these our Souls at a due and reasonable Rate, and we shall not be apt to be seduced, by unworthy Compliances, to renounce or be ashamed of our highest Interest, and to cast away our selves for ever. Would we thus frequently think of, and deeply consider the great Value and Interest of our immortal Souls, it would happily secure our falling into so great an Evil, and most effectually subdue all kind of Temptations to it, unless Men were disposed to run themselves upon the most apparent Ruin and Destruction. And this will bring me to a

3. Thing requisite thereunto: A due and frequent Examination of our present Faith and Religion. 'Tis a duty plainly laid down, and strictly injoyned by the Apostle, 2 Cor. 13.5. *Examine your selves whether ye be in the Faith: prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates.* A firmness in Faith doth necessary imply a precious Knowledge and Under-

Underſtanding of it; for we cannot be ſaid to be withdrawn from what we do not firſt own and underſtand. Now 'tis much to be feared and ſuſpected, That too many, who ſeem to be very Reſolute, and make a very great Noiſe about Faith and Religion, do not rightly, if at all, conceive or apprehend what they mean by them. For Men are apt to take up with Hear-ſay, Education, or the like: Whereas that Faith is only and properly ours, which we embrace upon our own Knowledge or Approbation. And now to prevent or avoid the Evil before us, let us duly weigh and conſider how we are diſpoſed and qualified in the great and weighty Matters of Religion. There is much talk, and a great noiſe made about it in the World; But doth my Soul rightly apprehend or conſider what is meant by it, or what is the deſign of it? Do I believe the Word of God, and thoſe great and myſterious Truths he hath diſcovered to me? Am I afraid of his Judgments, aſſured of his Promiſes, and convinced of his Veracity in all Things? Do I truſt upon his Power, Mercy, and Goodneſs? And am I aſſured of his juſt Anger and Severity? Am I convinced and perſwaded in the Truth and Excellency of thoſe Things I profeſs to believe? And is all this firmly fixed and rooted in my Soul; *Not in Word or in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth? And do I believe with all my Heart, with all my Soul, and with all my Mind?* Hereupon I may ſay with the Apoſtle, *Beloved, if in theſe things our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.* And this will be ſuch a Qualification as will keep us ſteady and immovable againſt all Oppoſition: We ſhall have that Conviction from within, and thoſe regular Motions in our Hearts, as will diſpoſe us to a ſutable Behaviour in all our Actions: For as a good Tree cannot bring forth corrupt Fruit, ſo a Mind well Principled and Indued, will be evermore happily diſpoſed to Subdue and Conquer whatever may tempt us to this Sin. And believe me, it requires a firm and well ſettled Faith to bear us up againſt all thoſe Hardſhips, and Difficulties that oppoſe us in our Chriſtian State. Whence you ſee how neceſſary and requiſite it is ſeriouſly and often to

consider the Case between God and our Souls, to become every day more and more confirmed and settled in the great and weighty Concerns of our Faith and our Religion: And hereupon we may do well in our present Circumstances to consider the Nature and Excellency of that Faith which is professed among us, that we grow in it more and more, and be firm and constant to it. For we enjoy, God be blessed, a Faith truly Orthodox and Catholick, in the best and purest Church upon Earth: That doth not prohibit or lock up the holy Scriptures from any, but doth enjoyn and practice the constant and daily Use and Reading of them: Where Sacraments are administer'd as Christ enjoyn'd them, in a most grave, solemn, and decent Manner: Whose Prayers are most pious and heavenly, every way suted to our several Wants and Necessities, and able to warm our Souls with a most fervent Zeal and Devotion. Let us study to improve in the knowledge and practice of this Faith, which will happily secure us from all dangerous Errors and Superstition. Here we are taught and enjoyn'd due Obedience to God, *strict Loyalty to our Prince*, Love and Charity to all Men. Its Doctrins are Sound and Orthodox. Its Discipline Pure and Primitive: *And as many as walk by this Rule, peace be on them, and on the Israel of God.* And now having so Good, so True, and Sound a Faith and Religion; if we desire and expect that God should preserve and continue it to us, *Let us hold fast this Profession of our Faith without wavering:* That nothing prevail upon us to injure, desert or betray, this truly Catholick and Apostolick Faith, as professed in the Church of *England.* The more we consider of, or know it, the better shall we like it, and become the firmer in it, upon a due and serious Examination and right Understanding of it; We shall find it will both deserve and instruct us in a firm Constancy and Resolution against all Opposition and Difficulty whatever. *Finally, my Brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might. Put on the whole Armor of God, that ye may able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers against spiritual Wickedness if the darkness of this*

World,

World, on High places: wherefore take unto you the whole Armor of God, that ye may be able to withſtand in the evil Day, and having done all to Stand, Eph. 6. 10.

4. It may be again requiſit herein to ſet before us the Pattern and Example of Chriſt, who was eminent in all Perfections, but eſpecially Remarkable for this; inſomuch that he himſelf tells us, *For this end was I born, and for this cauſe came I into the World, that I ſhould bear Witneſs unto the Truth.* Which he never diſſembled, but conſtantly aſſerted with the greateſt Courage and Reſolution; *I ſpeak openly in the Synagogue.* So far was he from Fear or Cowardice, and ſo compleat this Pattern that he underwent the extreameſt Sufferings even unto Death for Truth, and a good Cauſe. *This Captain of our Salvation* being ſo Brave and Generous, we are obliged both in Favour and Duty to imitate and reſemble his Courage and Conſtancy; and, like him, firmly maintain Truth and Integrity, whatever it coſts us. This will reſemble us to Chriſt at preſent, and bring us to the Enjoyment of him hereafter. Whereupon I ſhall conclude with the Apoſtle, 1 Tim. 6. 13. *I give thee charge in the ſight of God, who quickneth all things, and before Chriſt Jeſus, who before Pontius Pilate witneſſed a good Confeſſion, that thou keep this Commandment without ſpot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

5. For another prevention or direction againſt this great Evil, let us often think and conſider of that great and terrible Threatning here mentioned; *And that if we be aſhamed of him, and his Words, in this Adulterous and Sinful Generation, of him ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* And certainly frequent and ſerious reflexions on that great and glorious Appearance, and that his coming in ſuch a Solemn and Terrible manner to recompence Puniſhment on us, ſhould preſerve us firm and ſteadfaſt in all holy Duties. For ſhould it not make us even now ſhrink and tremble to think with our ſelves, that he will call us to a ſtrict Account, and puniſh us moſt ſeverely for theſe things another Day. How ſhall we look, or what ſhall we be able to ſay, when we come to appear before him in ſuch Majeſty and Honour?

Wherefore

Wherefore if we keep the Thoughts of this ſo great and terrible Appearance always freſh, and ſettled in our Minds, it will make us not dare to be guilty of ſo great a Sin, as we will anſwer hereafter at our utmoſt peril. *For if we deny him, he alſo will deny us*, 2 Tim. 2. 12.

6. Let us be ſtrict and ſincere in all holy Duties, *That we adorn the Doctrin of Chriſt in all things, and walk worthy of our Profeſſion.* A good Faith is the moſt of all indanger'd by an undue and irregular Practice. If by our ungodly and wicked Lives we Diſhonour our Religion, we make a very forward ſtep towards a denial of it, and it may be juſt in God quite to remove it from us. If therefore we would conſult the Intereſt of true Religion, and do deſign, or would deſire, the ſecurity and continuance of it; Let us walk conſcienciouſly by the Rule we profeſs, and not dare any longer to continue practices ſo repugnant to all Piety and Religion, remembring what the Apoſtle threatens ſome, *Who becauſe they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be ſaved. For this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion, that they ſhould believe a lie*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 10.

But to compleat, and perfect all, we muſt be ſure to ſuperadd in the Seventh and Laſt Place, our moſt humble and hearty Prayers to Almighty God, That he by his Grace, or Holy Spirit, would aſſiſt us againſt this great and fatal Evil. *That he would ſupport us under all Dangers, and carry us through all Temptations. That he would ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle us. That he would graft in our Hearts the Love of his Name, increaſe in us true Religion, nouriſh us with all Goodneſs, and of his great Mercy keep us in the ſame. That he being our Ruler and Guid, we may ſo paſs through things Temporal, that we finally loſe not the things Eternal. That ſo Chriſt our Lord may not be aſhamed of us, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.—*

Now our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlaſting conſolation, and good hope through Grace, comfort your Hearts, and ſtabliſh you in every good Word and Work, 2 Theſſ. 2. 16, 17.

F I N I S.